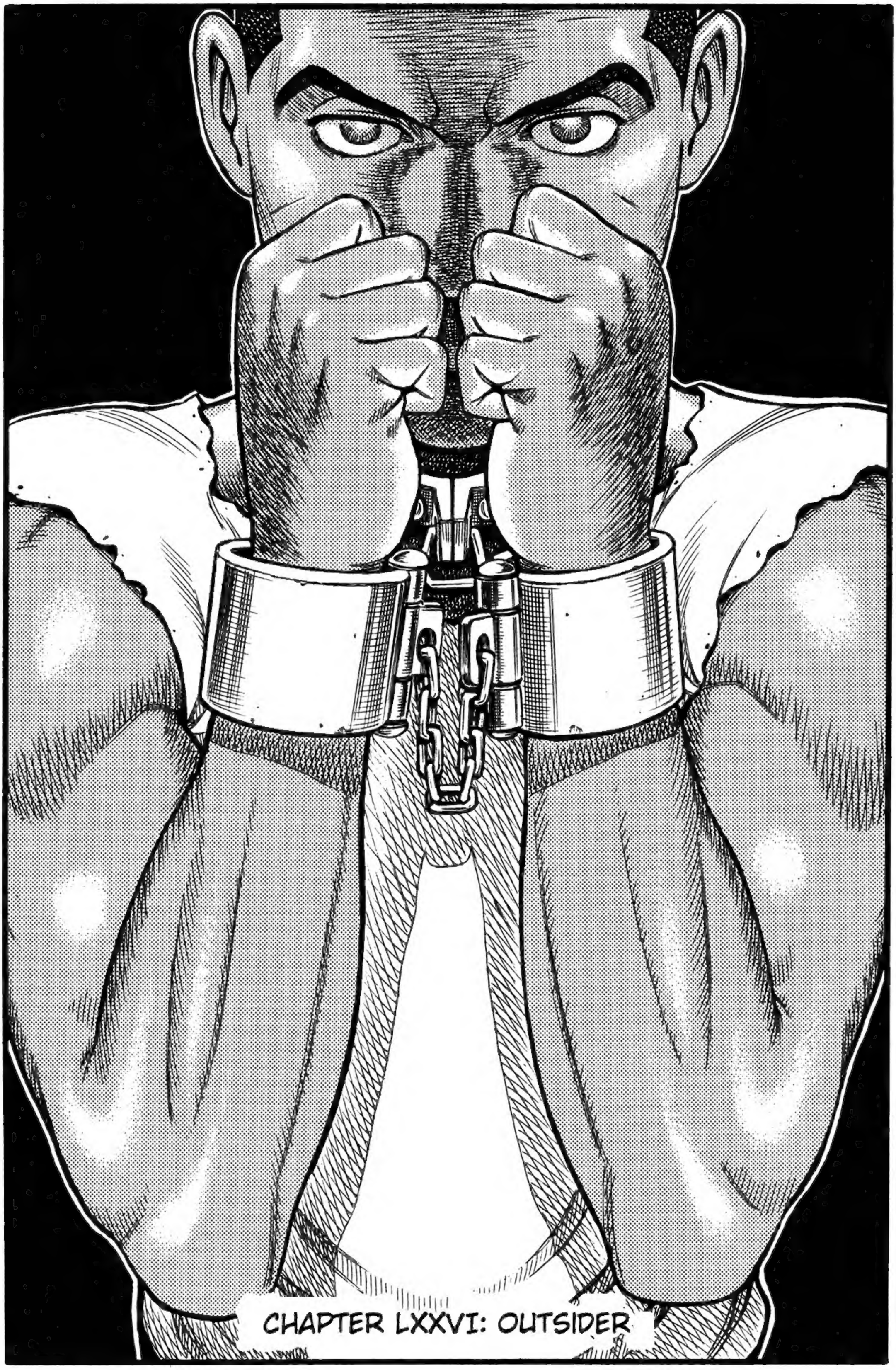

CHAPTER LXXVI: OUTSIDER

RAAH!

ENOUGH, QUIT IT ZORA!

STOP THAT!

ZU

CRACK

IF YOU DON'T...

GORGH!

HM...?

YOU SHOULD GET THE INJURED AWAY.

WHAT WAS IT THAT SET HIM OFF?!

ALL THE FARM HANDS HAVE GATHERED?

ONE OF THE NEW YOUNG FARMHANDS SUDDENLY LOST IT.

IT WAS A FIGHT.

WHAT'S ALL THIS FUSS OVER SOME CAPTURE?

HOLD IT THERE.

DID IT HAPPEN TO BE THAT NO GOOD, IMPERTINENT BLACK BOY?

HA, HAAH.

DID YOU COME ACROSS A THIEF?

YES, IT WAS HIM!

NO MATTER HOW THINGS MAY BE...

HE'S ONE BOY, YOU'RE OVERSTATING IT ALL.

OI OI!

THINGS'LL BE BAD IF YOU DON'T HELP.

YOU DEAL WITH FIGHTS BY TRADE RIGHT?

...

I'M SERIOUS, GIVE US SOME HELP.

NO NORMAL BOY WOULD CAUSE THIS MUCH TROUBLE.

OOOI, RADDOCK!

WELL...

IT'D ONLY BE COURTEOUS THAT I GET INVOLVED, I CAN'T JUST IGNORE THIS.

SO HE'S NO ORDINARY CHARACTER EH?

I'M GETTING ALL THE MORE INTERESTED...!

JUST WHAT COULD'VE ANGERED HIM SO...

THOUGH HE WAS ESPECIALLY BAD IN THIS INSTANCE.

TRUTH BE TOLD, HE'S ALREADY BEYOND MY CONTROL!

IT'S NOT THE FIRST FIRST TIME HE'S GOTTEN VIOLENT.

RIGHT BOSS?

YOU CAN'T EXACTLY GO CHEAP WITH THE TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE.

TO USE NETTING MEANT FOR BIRDS TO CAPTURE HIM.

STILL, WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT...

MMM, HARD TO SAY.

SO, RECKON THE BOY HAS POTENTIAL?

TO HAVE INJURED WORKERS DURING THE HARVEST...

AAAH... THIS IS TROUBLE.

WE'LL HAVE TO SEE WITH AN ACTUAL FIGHT.

YET FROM LOOKING OVER THOSE HE INJURED, IT DOESN'T LOOK AS THOUGH HE MADE MANY MISSES...

WHICH IS A LITTLE SURPRISING.

IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE HARD TO PUNCH AS YOU'D LIKE...

IT WAS A FREE FOR ALL, SO AMIDST THEM PULLING AND TRYING TO CATCH HIM...

I TAKE IT HE'S NO ONE ELSE FOR SUPPORT BUT HIMSELF?

IT'D SUGGEST HE'S USED TO FIGHTING MULTIPLE OPPONENTS...

HEHE...

YET I'D LIKE A LITTLE EXCHANGE.

NAMELY THAT YOU GIVE THAT BOY OVER TO ME...

WELL, LET'S NOT BE DISHEARTENED.

IF YOU NEED THE HELP I'LL LEND YOU FROM MY LOT.

JUST SAY THE WORD.

REALLY NOW?!

OR DID YOU WANT TO OUTRIGHT SELL HIM?

I FIGURED THAT'D BE IT.

WELL, WELL...

YES, YES, IT'S TASTY RIGHT!

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WHILE I'VE NO CONCERN FOR HIM, ZORA...

HAS A REAL TEMPER! YET EVEN SO...

NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST.

I MEAN YOU'RE NOT CUTE AT ALL!

I AIN'T GONNA SAY THANKS OLD MAN.

YOU TRYING TO DOMESTICATE ME?!

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I'M GIVING A HAND TO THE MASTER HERE.

OH BUT I AM.

THE HELL YOU EVEN BOTHERING WITH ME FOR.

IF YOU AIN'T INVOLVED...

AND AS FOR THAT BASTARD...

HE'S NOTHING BUT A COWARD YOU KNOW!

I MANAGED TO GET THEM ALL...

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TRULY STRONG MEN CAN USE THEIR HEADS TOO.

WERE YOU TO FIGHT RADDOCK, HE'D GET YOU IN ABOUT THREE SECONDS.

DON'T GO DECIDING THINGS ON YOUR OWN.

THEN HOW'S ABOUT WE HAVE YOU STUDY WTH MY FIGHTERS, SEE HOW YOU MEASURE UP.

I MEAN IN THAT CASE...

DON'T BELITTLE ME.

YOU COULD ONLY KNOW BY TRYING!

NOW NOW, IT'D BE HOPE-LESS.

I MEAN, ISN'T THAT YOU BELITTLING THE POWER OF SOMEONE'S ACTUAL PROFESSION?

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE INVINCIBLE, ZORA...?

!

...

AND YOU STRUCK ME RIGHT AWAY.

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT YOU'RE AN OUTSIDER, THE TYPE WHO CAN QUICKLY ADJUST TO FAILURE.

IN MY BUSINESS YOU HAVE TO HAVE A GOOD NOSE.

NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, YOU SHARE NO FRIENDSHIPS.

WITH NO REAL REASON, YOU FIND YOURSELF CONSTANTLY ANGRY, DAY AND NIGHT, NO?

EACH AND EVERY LITTLE THING JUST IRRITATES YOU.

YOU'VE NEVER MADE ANYTHING WITH YOUR OWN POWER, AND YET YOU DON'T WISH FOR PEOPLE TO BELITTLE YOU.

YOU MAY BRISTLE WITH KILLING INTENT, BUT IT WILL DO NOUGHT BUT FLAKE AWAY.

WHILE YOU MIGHT BE OVERLY LOUD AND HOTBLOODED...

YOU DO NOTHING BUT SPEND EACH DAY WOUND UP...

IN SHORT, YOUR GUTS ARE BRITTLE.

IT SHOWS YOU'VE NO ACTUAL SELF.

WHEN CRITISIZED EVEN A LITTLE, YOU GET MAD AND FLY INTO A RAGE.

ALL YOU CAN DO IS APPEAL TO VIOLENCE, YOU REJECT EVERYTHING.

ALL YOU'RE DOING IS RUNNING AWAY FROM THE WORLD, TRYING TO SULK IN THE SHADE LIKE SOME SNIVELLING STRAY.

LEMME PUT IT CLEARLY.

YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO ACT THE LONE WOLF, BUT YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE.

THEN I'LL KILL YOU, YOU MOUSTACHED FOX!

SHUT UP AND LISTEN YOU.

IF YOU WANNA KEEP DROANING ON...

...!

WOULDN'T THE APPLAUSE YOU GET FROM TAKING DOWN SOMEONE TRULY STRONG BE EXHILARATING!

IT'D BE NOTHING TO BOAST OF PUNCHING ME HERE, BUT...

SEEMS YOU SHOW YOUR REAL SELF WHEN MAD.

WHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD CAN YOU EARN YOUR MEALS BY PUNCHING OTHERS?

I'D THOUGHT IT'D BE THE PERFECT FORM OF SELF EXPRESSION FOR YOU BUT...

NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED!

LEMME FIGHT SOMEONE STRONG OLD MAN!

ALRIGHT, GIMME A GO!

I REALLY SAW DEATH...

BACK THEN...

LET THIS TEACH YOU NOT TO SCORN SOMEONE'S EMOTIONAL STRTENGH.

YOU UNDERESTIMATED YOUR OPPONENT'S FIGHTING SPIRIT.

ENOUGH, LET'S PULL IT TOGETHER CESTVS.

THAT'S NOT ME TRYING TO ACT TOUGH, I CAN JUST FEEL IT!

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ONE MORE HIT, AND HE WOULD'VE DIED.

WHILE I COULDN'T TAKE A STEP BACK!

YET EVEN SO, MONSON DIDN'T ABANDON THE MATCH...

UNAFRAID OF DEATH, HE STEPPED FORWARD!

FROM HERE ON...

YOUR PATH WILL BE ENCROACHED UPON BY THE LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH NUMEROUS TIMES...

YOU WERE FIGHTING AN OPPONENT STRONG IN BODY AND SOUL.

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YOU...

HAVE TO AT LEAST BE ABLE TO CROSS THAT LINE!

OTHERWISE YOU CANNOT SURVIVE, CESTVS!

YOU MUST STRIKE WITH THE INTENT TO KILL!